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ABSTRACT

This instructional module on human development aspects of aging is one in a block of 10 modules designed to provide the human services worker who works with older adults with basic information regarding the aging process. An introduction provides an overview of the module content. A listing of general objectives follows. Two sections present informative material on each of the two objectives. Topics are changes and developments of life, including external and internal factors influencing development, and stages of growing and learning. Other contents include a summary and listings of selected readings and additional resources. (YLB)

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BLOCK A

Basic Knowledge of the Aging Process

MODULE A·3

Human Development Aspects of Aging

CE045029

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF AGING

MODULE A.3

THE ELDERLY SERVICE WORKERS' TRAINING PROJECT WISHES TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION OF THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF AGING" MODULE.

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Introduction

"Why don't you act your age?"

"He's too young to know any better!"

"There's no fool like an old fool!"

Most people have made comments such as these. How does one know what is an age-appropriate activity? When is one old enough to know better?

Everyone has their own "inside calendar" that schedules when they will develop or reach a certain stage of development. There are no magic numbers on the calendar, no firm deadlines that say "Now or Never". Each individual develops in a unique way.

The schedule on each person's calendar is the result of many factors, such as personality, self-concept and traumatic life events, which help to decide when and how he/she will grow and learn. Heredity and environment join together to produce something unique and special - the human being.

This module describes stages of human development and the special events that highlight each stage. Various forces that affect each stage are also discussed. The module is provided to enhance the caregiver's understanding of what may have influenced an Older Adult's life in the past.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

UPON COMPLETION OF THIS MODULE, YOU WILL:

(1) BE AWARE OF THE FACTORS WHICH AFFECT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

(2) BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN LIFE, IN RELATION TO THE OLDER ADULT.

THIS SECTION WILL PRESENT TO YOU, FACTORS WHICH AFFECT DEVELOPMENT.

CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS OF LIFE

UPON COMPLETION OF THIS SECTION, YOU WILL BE AWARE OF THE FACTORS WHICH AFFECT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

PEOPLE EXPERIENCE MANY CHANGES IN LIFE. THEY CHANGE THEIR HAIR COLOUR, THEIR MINDS, THEIR JOBS AND THEIR PARTNERS. SOME OF THE CHANGES ARE PLANNED; SOME ARE NOT. SOME ARE OBVIOUS CHANGES; OTHERS ARE HIDDEN FROM VIEW.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES BOTH PREDICTABLE AND UNPREDICTABLE PATTERNS OF PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THE THREE DEPEND ON EACH OTHER. LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRIZES. PEOPLE WILL BENEFIT OR SUFFER FROM THE UNEXPECTED. CONSIDER THE 6 YEAR OLD WHOSE FATHER SUDDENLY DIES; THINK OF THE TEENAGER WHO DEVELOPS A CHRONIC DISEASE. THESE PEOPLE MAY WELL DEVELOP IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN THE AVERAGE, WHICH IS CONSIDERED THE 'NORMAL', PREDICTABLE PATTERN OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT AFFECT HOW A PERSON GOES THROUGH LIFE'S STAGES. BIOLOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE TEMPERED BY ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Factors which affect development from an external and internal perspective will be discussed.

External Factors Influencing Development

The economics of one's world greatly affect development. Affordable available nutrition dictates body growth in childhood and later. Employment and salary levels affect how and when the adult will retire. For example, the Depression of the 30's dramatically affected both children and adults, but in different ways.

Political changes affect human development. Availability and quality of schooling, competition for jobs, adequacy of social services; all of these factors influence quality of life. Survivors of war develop differently than those who grew up during peacetime. War experienced as a child affects a person differently than war experienced as an adult.

Technology changes affect life patterns. Medical advances salvage lives otherwise doomed to disability; computers change what is important for people to learn; television makes other communication techniques obsolete.

SOCIAL CHANGES CAN ALSO AFFECT AN INDIVIDUAL'S DIRECTION IN LIFE. WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE FROM EACH OF THE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED EXTERNAL FACTORS, SOCIETY IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. CHANGES IN LEVELS OF EDUCATION, WOMENS' ROLE IN THE WORKFORCE AND AT HOME, MOBILITY AND THE FAMILY STRUCTURE (I.E., NUCLEAR FAMILY IN PLACE OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY), ARE EVIDENT ESPECIALLY IN RECENT YEARS.

WHILE THESE CHANGES OCCUR OUTSIDE THE PERSON, THEY STILL AFFECT THE INDIVIDUAL'S DEVELOPMENT.

Internal Factors Influencing Development

Both the Physiological Aspects of Aging, and the Psychological Aspects of Aging modules present detailed information on the changes that occur with age. A quick review of the entire lifespan sees irregular bursts of physical development. Rates of energy and growth peak before birth, slow until puberty, then undergo another spurt of activity. This is followed by a slow decrease throughout the rest of life.

Social scientists have studied human development and identified a specific pattern and several stages of the development. Their descriptions are of the "average"pattern; they are not rigid rules. The baby is not a genius because he walks at nine months; the toddler is not retarded because he can't talk at two years. Changes within the person are discussed in more detail in the next section. It is important to remember that the environment we live in has a strong influence on the resolution of each psychosocial task faced throughout the stages of development.

THIS SECTION WILL PRESENT TO YOU, THE STAGES IN THE HUMAN LIFE CYCLE.

STAGES OF GROWING AND LEARNING

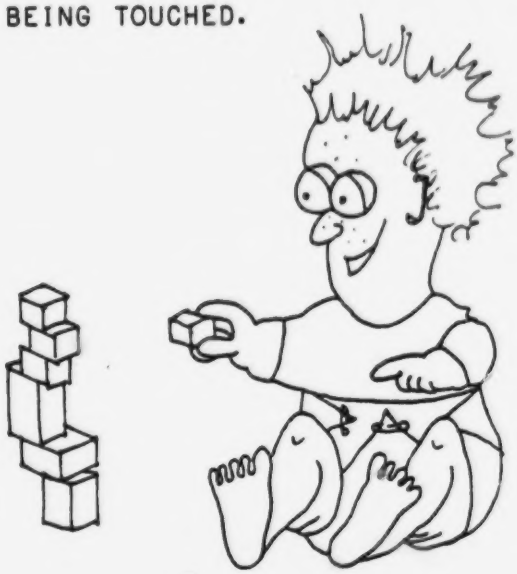
UPON COMPLETION OF THIS SECTION, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN LIFE, IN RELATION TO THE OLDER ADULT.

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCES WILL HELP THE CAREGIVER TO ACCEPT INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPRECIATE EACH PERSON'S INDIVIDUALITY. THIS SECTION PRESENTS A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ENTIRE LIFE PICTURE FROM START TO FINISH BASED ON THE WORK OF ERIC ERICKSON , A PROFESSOR OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. HE DIVIDED 'LIFE' INTO EIGHT (8) STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT, EACH OF WHICH HAS A POSITIVE AND A NEGATIVE COMPONENT. IN READING THESE IT WILL ALSO BECOME EVIDENT THAT ONE'S PERSONALITY DEVELOPS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE CYCLE. ALTHOUGH RESOLUTION OF SPECIFIC TASKS MAY BE MORE EVIDENT IN CERTAIN STAGES AS DEVELOPMENT, THESE ISSUES CAN OCCUR THROUGHOUT LIFE.

Stage 1 Basic Trust vs Mistrust: (Infant.)

For children of this age, the most important learning is to trust: learning that others are reliable and available to meet their needs. Trust is learned as they are kept warm, fed, and loved.

Physically these infants are busy bees - learning to grasp objects, creep, crawl and stand. Learning occurs through the senses, eg., seeing, hearing, touching and being touched.



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THE DEGREE TO WHICH THESE INFANTS COME TO TRUST OTHERS AND THE WORLD AROUND, DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF CARE THAT THEY RECIEVED IN THE PAST. THIS CONCEPT IS TRUE FOR ALL THE LATER DIMENSIONS.

STAGE II AUTONOMY VS DOUBT: (1 - 3 YEARS OF AGE)

CHILDREN AT THIS STAGE LEARN THE THRILL OF ACTING INDEPENDENTLY, GAINING A SENSE THAT THEY CAN CONTROL THEIR MUSCLES AND IMPULSES, IF ALLOWED TO TRY, TO EXPERIMENT.

CHILDREN CANNOT YET THINK OF THE FUTURE; THEY ARE SELF CENTERED AND SLOWLY LEARN THAT THEY AND THEIR MOTHER ARE SEPARATE PEOPLE. THEIR USE OF LANGUAGE IS AWKWARD OFTEN MIMICING OTHERS. SMALL WONDER ONE OF THEIR FIRST WORDS IS "NO"! IF THEY ARE NOT GIVEN POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT THEY CAN FACE THE LATER STAGES OF

DEVELOPMENT WITH A SENSE OF DOUBT AND SHAME. HOWEVER, AS A RESULT OF LATER EVENTS IN THE LIFE CYCLE, THE BALANCE OF AUTONOMY AND DOUBT CAN ALTER.

STAGE III INITIATIVE VS GUILT: (4 - 5 YEARS OF AGE)

DURING THESE YEARS THE CHILDREN BEGIN TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO START TASKS ALONE, THOUGH THEY MAY NOT FINISH THEM. THEY START TO LEARN WHAT OTHERS EXPECT OF THEM AS A BOYS OR GIRLS.

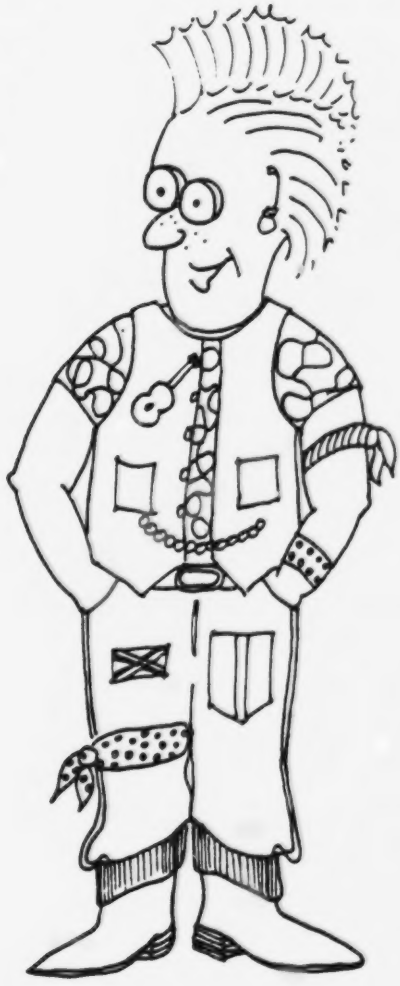
THEY ARE PHYSICALLY GAINING IN MUSCLE COORDINATION AND CAN RUN AND HOP. THEIR MINDS ARE FULL OF QUESTIONS AND FANTASIES. POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO PURSUE THESE ACTIVITIES WILL HELP TO REINFORCE INITIATIVE. DISINTEREST OR NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO THESE ACTIVITIES MAY RESULT IN THE CHILD DEVELOPING A SENSE OF GUILT OVER SUCH SELF-INITIATED ACTIVITIES.

STAGE IV INDUSTRY VS INFERIORITY (6 - 11 YEARS OF AGE)

CHILDREN ARE INDUSTRIOUS, WITH A DESIRE TO KNOW HOW THINGS ARE MADE AND HOW THEY WORK. THEY ARE PROUD TO BE ABLE TO FINISH A TASK AND ONCE AGAIN IF THIS IS ECOURAGED THE SENSE OF INDUSTRY IS ENHANCED. THEY ARE AWARE OF BEING COMPARED TO OTHERS. THEY ARE RIGID IN THEIR IDEAS OF RIGHT OR WRONG. THEY CAN UNDERSTAND IN A CONCRETE MANNER CONCEPTS SUCH AS ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OTHER THAN THE FAMILY, PARTICULARLY PEER-RELATED ACTIVITIES, COME INTO FOCUS DURING THIS STAGE.

Stage V Identity vs Role Confusion (12 - 18 years of age)

Teenagers learn an identity separate from their parents.



Less rigid in thought than in their younger years, they can see others' points of view. They can think of the future, and can understand abstract concepts of 'justice', 'equality'. This level of abstract thinking continues throughout life; however, the questioning of adult values and principles is most evident during the adolescent years.

STAGE VI INTIMACY VS ISOLATION (YOUNG ADULTHOOD)

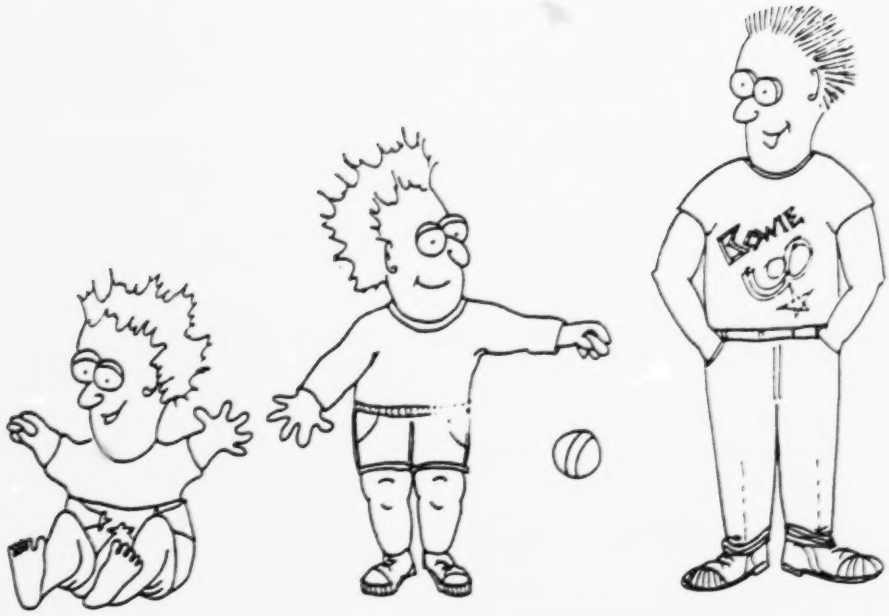
THIS IS A TIME OF MANY TASKS - ACHIEVING INTIMACY WITH A LOVED ONE, CHOOSING AND PREPARING FOR A CAREER. BEING ABLE TO LOVE ANOTHER PERSON IS POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN ONE LIKES AND FEELS GOOD ABOUT ONESELF.

STAGE VII GENERACTIVITY VS SELF-ABSORPTION (MIDDLE AGE)

THIS IS A BUSY TIME, RAISING ONE'S CHILDREN AND HELPING ONE'S OWN AGING PARENTS. IT IS A TIME OF GENERATING SOMETHING OF LASTING VALUE RATHER THAN JUST LIVING DAY TO DAY. THESE MAY BE SEEN AS THE 'BEST YEARS' OF LIFE.

Stage VIII Integrity vs Despair (Old Age)

The later years are a time when people reflect back and try to put lifes' successes and failures into perspective;a time of integration. It is a time of many developmental changes - adjusting to a smaller income, changing body functions. During these years a grieving of losses can occur, such as, loss of friends and loved ones, loss of ability to be as active as in years gone by and a feeling of value to society. For those who are unable to intergrate these experiences meaningfully, it is a time of despair.



THE ABOVE MAJOR STAGES ARE MERELY A GUIDELINE FOR LOOKING AT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. THE STAGES SHOW TASKS COMMON TO ALL WHO PASS THROUGH THE LIFE CYCLE. A STUDY OF THE STAGES HELPS ONE TO UNDERSTAND THAT MANY PAST INFLUENCES IN LIFE CAN ALTER THE WAY AN INDIVIDUAL FEELS AND PERCEIVES THINGS IN LATER YEARS. THERE ARE MANY OTHER FACTORS THAT AFFECT WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PERSON AS THEY GROW FROM STAGE TO STAGE.

REMEMBER THE STAGES OF MIDDLE AGE AND OLD AGE? WHAT HAPPENS TO THE 50 YEAR OLDS WHO SEE THEIR SKILLS BEING NO LONGER VALUED IN THE WORKPLACE?

HOW ABOUT THE 70 YEAR OLD WHO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE NEW COMPUTER LANGUAGE? HOW CAN ONE FEEL VALUED AND WORTHWHILE IF ONE FEELS OUT-OF-DATE AND OBSOLETE?

THE OLDER PERSON TODAY HAS, IN THEIR LIFETIME, GONE FROM THE HORSE AND BUGGY ERA TO THE SPACE AGE. THEY HAVE SEEN MORE CHANGE THAN ANY OTHER GENERATION. INSTEAD OF FEELING WISE AND EXPERIENCED, THE OLDER ADULTS MAY WELL FEEL THAT THE WORLD HAS PASSED THEM BY. HOW OTHERS VIEW US AFFECTS HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES.

Lastly, one's health has an important influence on development. Chronic poor health in a society that values strength and vigour is bound to have an effect on the person's mental and physical development.

All that happens to a person is interrelated. Just like snowflakes, every person is different.

Implications for Caregivers

What importance does early childhood development have to the caregiver who is looking after an 80 year old war veteran confined to a wheelchair?

It is important to recognize that, while the war and injuries do affect the person, so do his childhood experiences. Perhaps as a child he learned that independence was all important - A real man did not let others look after him. Perhaps he learned that the man's opinion held sway - that it was his right to be obeyed. Perhaps he learned that children were meant to care for aged parents and here he may be with no children living nearby.

Childhood experiences do affect how the person views old age and infirmity. An understanding of all this will help the caregiver to then understand and accept an older adults personal reaction to problems.

EVERYONE EXPERIENCES SPECIAL EVENTS - A SUDDEN DEATH IN THE FAMILY, UNEXPECTED ILLNESS, WEALTH OR POVERTY. WHILE ALL THESE EVENTS INFLUENCE ONES' LIFE, THE TIME PERIOD WHEN THEY OCCUR, THEIR SEVERITY, AND HOW THEY ARE PERCIEVED, WILL DECIDE HOW MUCH INFLUENCE IS FELT.

THE EFFECT OF THE WORLD WARS HAD A DIFFERENT EFFECT FOR THE CANADIAN CHILD THAN THEY DID FOR THE GERMAN CHILD. THEY HAD A DIFFERENT EFFECT FOR THE SIX YEAR OLD THAN FOR THE 20 YEAR OLD. THESE EFFECTS LAST A LIFETIME.

NORMAL EVENTS - GETTING MARRIED AND HAVING CHILDREN - HAVE A DIFFERING EFFECT ON A PERSON OF 30 THAN ON A PERSON OF 17. REMEMBER, WHEN AND HOW IMPORTANT THE EVENT WAS IS AS SIGNIFICANT AS THE EVENT ITSELF. HOW THE PERSON INVOLVED PERCEIVED THE EVENT AND WHAT IT DID TO THAT PERSON'S LIFE ARE THE KEY FACTORS.

LISTENING ACTIVELY WILL FURTHER ENHANCE THE CAREGIVERS UNDERSTANDING OF THE OLDER ADULT. (THE 'LISTENING AND THE OLDER ADULT MODULE' DISCUSSES COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING SKILLS IN MORE DETAIL.) THE OLDER ADULT STILL NEEDS TO HAVE A PURPOSE OR MEANING IN LIFE. THE CARE GIVER CANNOT MAKE SWEEPING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ALL OLD PEOPLE BEING THE SAME. EACH ONE HAS A STORY; EACH ONE IS DIFFERENT. CONSIDER THE SNOWFLAKE!

Summary

An understanding of human development from birth through old age is far from simple. The person is unique from conception onwards; a great variety of internal and external factors affect the developing human being.

Full understanding of why a person is the way he/she is, is not possible. What is possible - and necessary - is to understand general human development and its many influences. This knowledge will help the caregiver appreciate that each person is special, with their very own history. No one could ask for more!

APPENDIX

Selected Readings

Bruno, Frank J. (1977). Human Adjustment and Personal Growth: Seven Pathways. Somerset, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

Erikson, Erik. (1959). Identity and the Life Cycle. New York: International Universities Press.

Havighurst, Robert. (1970). Developmental Tasks and Education 2nd ed. New York: David McKay.

Additional Resources

Place: Centre on Aging
338 Isbister Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2N2

Description

Audiotape available on: - "Altruism and the Adult Life Cycle". Presented by David Cheal, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, University of Winnipeg, November 25, 1983.

Place: National Film Board of Canada
245 Main St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 1A7

The Family:Portraits of Change

The family has been changing since the last century, but in the last decade the effects of change have been spectacular. Since the sexual revolution our commitment to marriage and family is in competition with the seductions of a more permissive society. As women rethink their needs, attitudes toward family and their role within it alter. The older familiar patterns have given way to new lifestyles. This film is a look at the changes that have taken place and the people who are living through them. Also interviewed are sociologists and family life experts, who shed new light on this phenomenon.

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86 minutes:32 seconds 106C 0179 315

Additional Resources Cont'd

Place: National Film Board of Canada Cont'd

A Special Letter

This gentle tribute, in animated form, celebrates the courage and enduring faith of a mother. The filmmaker resolves her feelings of impatience towards an aged mother while recalling their shared wartime experiences in a concentration camp. Through shimmering sepia images and an evocative musical score, the film shows that the gift of life can be reciprocated as the aging parent becomes the child.

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5 minutes:15 seconds 106C 0184 023

Standing Alone

A thoughtful portrait of Pete Standing Alone, a Blood Indian who is torn between being faithful to his Indian heritage and religion, and supporting his people through their transition into the industrial age. Though he teaches his sons how to break horses and hunt on horseback, he knows they will probably never use these skills. The film is a sequel to the NFB classic Circle of the Sun, produced 25 years ago.

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57 minutes:50 seconds 106C 01 82 058

Acknowledgements

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ADDITIONAL TRANSPARENCY SLIDES WERE MADE AVAILABLE BY:

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MANITOBA HEART FOUNDATION

TITLES OF THE TRAINING PROJECT'S MODULES

BLOCK A: BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF AGING PROCESS

A.1 PROGRAM PLANNING FOR OLDER ADULTS
A.2 STEREOTYPES OF AGING
A.3 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF AGING
A.4 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AGING
A.5 PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF AGING
A.6 DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT
A.7 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF AGING
A.8 CONFUSION AND THE OLDER ADULT
A.9 NUTRITION AND THE OLDER ADULT
A.10 LISTENING AND THE OLDER ADULT

BLOCK B: CULTURAL GERONTOLOGY

B.1 UKRAINIAN CULTURE
B.1.1 COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT
B.1.2 COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT

B.2 GERMAN CULTURE
B.2.1 COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT

B.3 FRENCH CULTURE
B.3.1 COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT

B.4 NATIVE CULTURE
B.4.1 COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT
B.4.2 COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT

BLOCK C: WORK ENVIRONMENT

C.1 WORK ENVIRONMENT I

NOTE: MOST MODULE'S ARE AVAILABLE IN TWO FORMATS:

A) PRINT FORMAT

OR

B) INTERACTIVE VIDEO (COMPUTER ASSISTED TELEVISION) FORMAT

RESOURCE MATERIALS:

HANDBOOK OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES
USER'S GUIDE